



United States Department of the Interior
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Bruneau Field Office
3948 Development Avenue
Boise, Idaho 83705



In Reply Refer To:
4100 (ID-120)

June 18, 2015

Dear Interested Party,

Thank you for your interest in the Big Springs Allotment grazing permit renewals. The purpose of this letter is to solicit input on land management alternatives for the Big Springs Allotment in the Bruneau Field Office (BFO), and notify you of additional data and clarification incorporated into the assessments and evaluations for the Big Springs Allotment. The BFO will prepare an environmental assessment (EA) that addresses the applications for livestock grazing based on scoping comments, laws, regulations, and policy. The BFO will analyze management options that have strong potential for land health improvements where standards are not being met, including a no grazing alternative.

Additional data and clarification of our riparian assessment process was incorporated into the assessments and evaluations for the three use areas within the Big Springs Allotment, which include: Sierra Del Rio, Dickshooter Cattle Co., and Joseph Black and Sons. The changes are summarized below by use area:

Joseph Black and Sons:

- Following field discussions with the permittee and BLM hydrologists, the BFO Interdisciplinary Team (ID Team) removed the upper reach of Camas Creek (segment 6.1) from our list of intermittent reaches and placed in the ephemeral category (Technical Reference 1737-15, 1998). The rating for this reach was removed from the tables and did not figure into the overall evaluation of meeting the standard. However, the discussion of condition and the context of the reach within the overall system were retained. Under Standards 2 and 3, the total miles of stream reaches reflects removal of 2.7 miles of Camas Creek, as well as earlier inaccuracies in total miles of streams.
- The ID Team confined proper functioning condition assessments to developed springs made at the spring source and associated wetland rather than developed sites (troughs or reservoirs). This topic was also validated in the field at a site originally identified as a "pond" from imagery but is actually a reservoir (location: 10S01W06 SWNW). Text in the assessment reflects that a field visit was made and that the reservoir itself was not rated.
- The ID Team revised evaluations to include rationale statements and context relevant to the use area. This included the percent of area in each condition and the amount of area relative to the total of the allotment.

Sierra Del Rio:

- In the wildlife section of the assessment, information on antelope and mule deer was added. This section was originally omitted.
- The ID Team confined proper functioning condition assessments to developed springs made at the spring source and associated wetland rather than developed sites (troughs or reservoirs). .
- All Evaluations were revised to include a rationale statement with clear logic framework for rating and an allotment-wide context. This included the percent of area in each condition and the amount of area relative to the total of the allotment.

Dickshooter Cattle Co.:

- Based on available data and given the proportion of riparian areas in proper functioning condition, the evaluation findings for Standard 2 and 3 was changed to Meeting the Standard. However, site-specific alternatives to address reaches that rated functioning at risk will be addressed in the subsequent NEPA document.
- In the wildlife section of the assessment, the ID Team added information on antelope and mule deer. This section was originally omitted.
- The ID Team confined proper functioning condition assessments to developed springs made at the spring source and associated wetland rather than developed sites (troughs or reservoirs). The ID Team included new 2014 data collected on willow use by livestock along Big Springs Creek; the corresponding text was updated to reflect changes in use levels over time.
- Battle Creek segment 33.6 was changed from “upward trend” to “trend not apparent” following an ID Team evaluation in 2014. This evaluation also noted distinct differences in stream morphology in this reach and split it into two reaches, both FAR/trend Not Apparent. This reach was also identified as a water gap in the past. The ID Team clarified that it is not a water gap project but has functioned in that capacity because Northwest allotment cattle trail across this reach on their way into Big Springs Allotment.
- The ID Team revised the evaluation to include a rationale statement with clear logic framework for rating and an allotment-wide context. This included the percent of area in each condition and the amount of area relative to the total of the allotment.

The rangeland health assessments and evaluations, in addition to comments from the public, will be used to develop alternatives in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Within the environmental assessment, proposals that address resource concerns within a given use area (including upland and riparian restoration, rangeland improvement projects) and changes to the terms and conditions of grazing permits will be considered in accordance with BLM policy. The ID Team will develop alternatives in a manner that maintains or improves resource conditions, to achieve objectives as described in the Bruneau Management Framework Plan, and to meet or make progress toward meeting the Idaho Standards for Rangeland Health. I anticipate completing the environmental assessment and decision by January 2016.

Although a scoping period was provided last fall, we are providing an additional 30-day scoping period given the additions and corrections to the assessment and evaluation. Written scoping comments must be submitted to Tanya Thrift, Bruneau Field Manager, 3948 Development Avenue, Boise, ID 83705, but no later than July 20, 2015. The office business hours for submitting hand-delivered comments are 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, excluding Federal holidays. Electronic scoping comments must be submitted in a format such as

an email message, plain text (.txt), rich text format (.rtf), Word (.doc), or portable document format (.pdf) to blm_id_bruneauoffice@blm.gov. E-mails submitted to e-mail addresses other than the one listed, in other formats than those listed, or containing viruses will be rejected. To be most helpful, comments sent electronically should include the title of this project “Bruneau Field Office Big Springs EA” in the subject line. Please identify whether you are submitting comments as an individual or as the designated spokesperson on behalf of an organization. Issues that are outside the scope of the proposal will not be addressed in the Bruneau Field Office Big Springs EA.

Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, please be advised that your entire comment, including your personal identifying information, may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold from public review your personal identifying information, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

The assessment and evaluation documents for the Big Springs Allotment on BLM’s website at the following link: <http://on.doi.gov/1ImX839>

We look forward to your response to this scoping effort. If you have questions, feel free to contact Holly Beck, the Big Springs EA ID team lead, at (208) 384-3362 or me at (208) 384-3331.

Respectfully,

/s/ Tanya M. Thrift

Tanya M Thrift
Bruneau Field Manager



United States Department of the Interior
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Bruneau Field Office
3948 Development Avenue
Boise, Idaho 83705



In Reply Refer To:
4100 (ID-120)

June 18, 2015

Dear Interested Party,

SURNAME/DATE	
Holly Beck	
Tanya Thrift	
Theresa	
Return to: Theresa Towne (120)	

Thank you for your interest in the Big Springs Allotment grazing permit renewals. The purpose of this letter is to solicit input on land management alternatives for the Big Springs Allotment in the Bruneau Field Office (BFO), and notify you of additional data and clarification incorporated into the assessments and evaluations for the Big Springs Allotment. The BFO will prepare an environmental assessment (EA) that addresses the applications for livestock grazing based on scoping comments, laws, regulations, and policy. The BFO will analyze management options that have strong potential for land health improvements where standards are not being met, including a no grazing alternative.

Additional data and clarification of our riparian assessment process was incorporated into the assessments and evaluations for the three use areas within the Big Springs Allotment, which include: Sierra Del Rio, Dickshooter Cattle Co., and Joseph Black and Sons. The changes are summarized below by use area:

Joseph Black and Sons:

- Following field discussions with the permittee and BLM hydrologists, the BFO Interdisciplinary Team (ID Team) removed the upper reach of Camas Creek (segment 6.1) from our list of intermittent reaches and placed in the ephemeral category (Technical Reference 1737-15, 1998). The rating for this reach was removed from the tables and did not figure into the overall evaluation of meeting the standard. However, the discussion of condition and the context of the reach within the overall system were retained. Under Standards 2 and 3, the total miles of stream reaches reflects removal of 2.7 miles of Camas Creek, as well as earlier inaccuracies in total miles of streams.
- The ID Team confined proper functioning condition assessments to developed springs made at the spring source and associated wetland rather than developed sites (troughs or reservoirs). This topic was also validated in the field at a site originally identified as a "pond" from imagery but is actually a reservoir (location: 10S01W06 SWNW). Text in the assessment reflects that a field visit was made and that the reservoir itself was not rated.
- The ID Team revised evaluations to include rationale statements and context relevant to the use area. This included the percent of area in each condition and the amount of area relative to the total of the allotment.

Sierra Del Rio:

- In the wildlife section of the assessment, information on antelope and mule deer was added. This section was originally omitted.
- The ID Team confined proper functioning condition assessments to developed springs made at the spring source and associated wetland rather than developed sites (troughs or reservoirs).
- All Evaluations were revised to include a rationale statement with clear logic framework for rating and an allotment-wide context. This included the percent of area in each condition and the amount of area relative to the total of the allotment.

Dickshooter Cattle Co.:

- Based on available data and given the proportion of riparian areas in proper functioning condition, the evaluation findings for Standard 2 and 3 was changed to Meeting the Standard. However, site-specific alternatives to address reaches that rated functioning at risk will be addressed in the subsequent NEPA document.
- In the wildlife section of the assessment, the ID Team added information on antelope and mule deer. This section was originally omitted.
- The ID Team confined proper functioning condition assessments to developed springs made at the spring source and associated wetland rather than developed sites (troughs or reservoirs). The ID Team included new 2014 data collected on willow use by livestock along Big Springs Creek; the corresponding text was updated to reflect changes in use levels over time.
- Battle Creek segment 33.6 was changed from “upward trend” to “trend not apparent” following an ID Team evaluation in 2014. This evaluation also noted distinct differences in stream morphology in this reach and split it into two reaches, both FAR/trend Not Apparent. This reach was also identified as a water gap in the past. The ID Team clarified that it is not a water gap project but has functioned in that capacity because Northwest allotment cattle trail across this reach on their way into Big Springs Allotment.
- The ID Team revised the evaluation to include a rationale statement with clear logic framework for rating and an allotment-wide context. This included the percent of area in each condition and the amount of area relative to the total of the allotment.

The rangeland health assessments and evaluations, in addition to comments from the public, will be used to develop alternatives in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Within the environmental assessment, proposals that address resource concerns within a given use area (including upland and riparian restoration, rangeland improvement projects) and changes to the terms and conditions of grazing permits will be considered in accordance with BLM policy. The ID Team will develop alternatives in a manner that maintains or improves resource conditions, to achieve objectives as described in the Bruneau Management Framework Plan, and to meet or make progress toward meeting the Idaho Standards for Rangeland Health. I anticipate completing the environmental assessment and decision by January 2016. Although a scoping period was provided last fall, we are providing an additional 30-day scoping period given the additions and corrections to the assessment and evaluation. Written scoping comments must be submitted to Tanya Thrift, Bruneau Field Manager, 3948 Development Avenue, Boise, ID 83705, but no later than July 20, 2015. The office business hours for

submitting hand-delivered comments are 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, excluding Federal holidays. Electronic scoping comments must be submitted in a format such as an email message, plain text (.txt), rich text format (.rtf), Word (.doc), or portable document format (.pdf) to blm_id_bruneauoffice@blm.gov. E-mails submitted to e-mail addresses other than the one listed, in other formats than those listed, or containing viruses will be rejected. To be most helpful, comments sent electronically should include the title of this project “Bruneau Field Office Big Springs EA” in the subject line. Please identify whether you are submitting comments as an individual or as the designated spokesperson on behalf of an organization. Issues that are outside the scope of the proposal will not be addressed in the Bruneau Field Office Big Springs EA.

Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, please be advised that your entire comment, including your personal identifying information, may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold from public review your personal identifying information, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

The assessment and evaluation documents for the Big Springs Allotment on BLM’s website at the following link: <http://on.doi.gov/1ImX839>

We look forward to your response to this scoping effort. If you have questions, feel free to contact Holly Beck, the Big Springs EA ID team lead, at (208) 384-3362 or me at (208) 384-3331.

Respectfully,

Tanya M Thrift
Bruneau Field Manager



United States Department of the Interior
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Bruneau Field Office
3948 Development Avenue
Boise, Idaho 83705



In Reply Refer To:
4100 (ID-120)

June 18, 2015

SURNAME/DATE	
Holly Beck	
Tanya Thrift	
Theresa	
Return to: Theresa Towne (120)	

Dear Interested Party,

Thank you for your interest in the Big Springs Allotment grazing permit renewals. The purpose of this letter is to solicit input on land management alternatives for the Big Springs Allotment in the Bruneau Field Office (BFO), and notify you of additional data and clarification incorporated into the assessments and evaluations for the Big Springs Allotment. The BFO will prepare an environmental assessment (EA) that addresses the applications for livestock grazing based on scoping comments, laws, regulations, and policy. The BFO will analyze management options that have strong potential for land health improvements where standards are not being met, including a no grazing alternative.

Additional data and clarification of our riparian assessment process was incorporated into the assessments and evaluations for the three use areas within the Big Springs Allotment, which include: Sierra Del Rio, Dickshooter Cattle Co., and Joseph Black and Sons. The changes are summarized below by use area:

Joseph Black and Sons:

- Following field discussions with the permittee and BLM hydrologists, the BFO Interdisciplinary Team (ID Team) removed the upper reach of Camas Creek (segment 6.1) from our list of intermittent reaches and placed in the ephemeral category (Technical Reference 1737-15, 1998). The rating for this reach was removed from the tables and did not figure into the overall evaluation of meeting the standard. However, the discussion of condition and the context of the reach within the overall system were retained. Under Standards 2 and 3, the total miles of stream reaches reflects removal of 2.7 miles of Camas Creek, as well as earlier inaccuracies in total miles of streams.
- The ID Team confined proper functioning condition assessments to developed springs made at the spring source and associated wetland rather than developed sites (troughs or reservoirs). This topic was also validated in the field at a site originally identified as a "pond" from imagery but is actually a reservoir (location: 10S01W06 SWNW). Text in the assessment reflects that a field visit was made and that the reservoir itself was not rated.

- The ID Team revised evaluations to include rationale statements and context relevant to the use area. This included the percent of area in each condition and the amount of area relative to the total of the allotment.

Sierra Del Rio:

- In the wildlife section of the assessment, information on antelope and mule deer was added. This section was originally omitted.
- The ID Team confined proper functioning condition assessments to developed springs made at the spring source and associated wetland rather than developed sites (troughs or reservoirs).
- All Evaluations were revised to include a rationale statement with clear logic framework for rating and an allotment-wide context. This included the percent of area in each condition and the amount of area relative to the total of the allotment.

Dickshooter Cattle Co.:

- Based on available data and given the proportion of riparian areas in proper functioning condition, the evaluation findings for Standard 2 and 3 was changed to Meeting the Standard. However, site-specific alternatives to address reaches that rated functioning at risk will be addressed in the subsequent NEPA document.
- In the wildlife section of the assessment, the ID Team added information on antelope and mule deer. This section was originally omitted.
- The ID Team confined proper functioning condition assessments to developed springs made at the spring source and associated wetland rather than developed sites (troughs or reservoirs). The ID Team included new 2014 data collected on willow use by livestock along Big Springs Creek; the corresponding text was updated to reflect changes in use levels over time.
- Battle Creek segment 33.6 was changed from “upward trend” to “trend not apparent” following an ID Team evaluation in 2014. This evaluation also noted distinct differences in stream morphology in this reach and split it into two reaches, both FAR/trend Not Apparent. This reach was also identified as a water gap in the past. The ID Team clarified that it is not a water gap project but has functioned in that capacity because Northwest allotment cattle trail across this reach on their way into Big Springs Allotment.
- The ID Team revised the evaluation to include a rationale statement with clear logic framework for rating and an allotment-wide context. This included the percent of area in each condition and the amount of area relative to the total of the allotment.

The rangeland health assessments and evaluations, in addition to comments from the public, will be used to develop alternatives in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Within the environmental assessment, proposals that address resource concerns within a given use area (including upland and riparian restoration, rangeland improvement projects) and changes to the terms and conditions of grazing permits will be considered in accordance with BLM policy. The ID Team will develop alternatives in a manner that maintains or improves resource conditions, to achieve objectives as described in the Bruneau Management Framework Plan, and to meet or make progress toward meeting the Idaho Standards for Rangeland Health. I anticipate completing the environmental assessment and decision by January 2016.

Although a scoping period was provided last fall, we are providing an additional 30-day scoping period given the additions and corrections to the assessment and evaluation. Written scoping comments must be submitted to Tanya Thrift, Bruneau Field Manager, 3948 Development Avenue, Boise, ID 83705, but no later than July 20, 2015. The office business hours for submitting hand-delivered comments are 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, excluding Federal holidays. Electronic scoping comments must be submitted in a format such as an email message, plain text (.txt), rich text format (.rtf), Word (.doc), or portable document format (.pdf) to blm_id_bruneauoffice@blm.gov. E-mails submitted to e-mail addresses other than the one listed, in other formats than those listed, or containing viruses will be rejected. To be most helpful, comments sent electronically should include the title of this project “Bruneau Field Office Big Springs EA” in the subject line. Please identify whether you are submitting comments as an individual or as the designated spokesperson on behalf of an organization. Issues that are outside the scope of the proposal will not be addressed in the Bruneau Field Office Big Springs EA.

Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, please be advised that your entire comment, including your personal identifying information, may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold from public review your personal identifying information, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

The assessment and evaluation documents for the Big Springs Allotment on BLM’s website at the following link: <http://on.doi.gov/1ImX839>

We look forward to your response to this scoping effort. If you have questions, feel free to contact Holly Beck, the Big Springs EA ID team lead, at (208) 384-3362 or me at (208) 384-3331.

Respectfully,

Tanya M Thrift
Bruneau Field Manager